

Socialist Worker

Kaimahi Whakahuihui

For Workers' Power and International Socialism

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Labour leader Helen Clark: 'There's something like a popular uprising going on'

'Popular uprising' shakes Coalition



AUCKLAND STUDENTS
outside occupied
Registry, October 8

ALL OF a sudden, a massive revolt against the Coalition and its 'more market' policies has taken off:

- Thousands have marched against health cuts in Dunedin, Tauranga, Whakatane, Whangarei, Blenheim and other centres.
- More health marches are coming up in Auckland, Wellington, Rotorua, Nelson, Invercargill and elsewhere.
- December 12 is National Health Action Day. There will be marches in all cities.
- There's a flurry of popular petitions: 'no confidence' in the Coalition, stop the Beehive shift, reduce the number of MPs, stop the government signing the Multilateral Agreement on Investments.
- There's been two university occupations in Auckland, plus student demonstrations in most other centres.

- The latest poll shows a record 84% dissatisfaction with the Coalition government. Labour now leads National by a huge 22 points, while support for NZ First has sunk to a laughable 1%.

- Protests are flaring up everywhere about everything: water privatisation, human rights, bulk funding, fire service, workfare, market rents, the list goes on.
- There's an increase in the number of strikes and of workers taking part industrial action. A rise in workers' confidence is evident. More strikes are in the pipeline.

PRESSURE FROM below has already shaken the Coalition, and more could blow it to bits. Now is the time to demonstrate, to strike, to occupy, to add your bit to the growing revolt against the loathsome Right-wing politicians occupying the Treasury benches.



■ BRITAIN

Blair's Labour fuels growing discontent

by TAD TIETZE

JUST FIVE months after a historic landslide victory in the British general election, Tony Blair's Labour government has suffered embarrassment at his party's national conference.

In a rebuff to Blair's Right-wing "modernising" drive, chief Labour strategist Peter Mandelson failed to be elected to the top executive body.

Instead, Left-wing MP Ken Livingstone has taken the vacant spot.

However, most party opposition to Blair's rightwing policies, which have led mainstream papers to dub him "son of Thatcher", remained muted at the conference.

Disquiet within the party has grown since May, and Blair was given a cold reception at last month's conference of Britain's trade union centre.

Blair is promoting policies to the Right of those pushed by the previous conservative government.

Plans to "reform" age pensions include forcing workers to take out private superannuation.



Blair says no to workers' rights

Promises to reduce hospital waiting lists have been scrapped, with Labour sticking to the Tories' tight public sector spending limits.

The government also announced MPs would be getting pay rises well in excess of inflation while it demanded a public sector pay freeze. Only after public outcry did it back off.

The most outrageous attacks have been in education. University students face the abolition of grants and the introduction of fees.

Thousands of students have signed up to a Stop the Fees Cam-

paign, and the National Union of Students has organised demonstrations around the country.

Britain's prolonged economic decline has led Labour leaders to embrace the priorities of the market as the only way to rescue British capitalism.

The rights of workers and the poor are merely obstacles on this road, as Blair's talk of "flexible" labour and welfare rights balanced by "responsibilities" have shown.

While many Labour governments have betrayed their promises of reform in the past, Blair isn't even offering real change.

Yet his election was based on a massive mood for change. The vote on May 1 reflected a hatred of the Tories' market policies.

Eventually working class discontent at Blair's Rightward direction will lead to a major confrontation.

The job for socialists in Britain is to build workers' opposition into a struggle which is clear about the need to fight the bosses and the market, even if that means fighting their "own" Labour government.

■ SERBIA

Milosevic shaken by protests

RIOT POLICE attacked recent demonstrations opposing the sacking of the mayor of Serbia's capital Belgrade, Zoran Djindjic, and several independent television editors.

Djindjic was democratically elected last November, but the Serbian government of Slobodan Milosevic ignored the result until daily mass street protests forced a backdown.

The sackings are seen as an attempt to roll back the movement's gains.

Serbian riot police have also at-

tacked a demonstration for separate Albanian-language universities by 20,000 ethnic Albanian students in the province of Kosovo.

It was the first mass protest since Milosevic deprived Kosovo of its autonomy and restricted the rights of Albanians, who make up 90% of the region's population.

During the war in former Yugoslavia, many commentators argued that Western intervention was necessary to end the nationalist bloodbath.

They called socialists "utopian" for arguing that the only solution

was workers standing against their nationalist rulers to stop the war.

But these protests, like those last November, show opposition from below was always a possibility.

If activists link the struggle for Albanian rights to that for democracy in Serbia, a serious alternative to the nationalist rulers could emerge.

letters

Socialist Worker welcomes your contribution. Post your letter to PO Box 8851, Auckland or fax 09-634-3984. Please include address or phone number to verify authorship and keep it under 200 words.

■ TWO PROTESTS

I WENT to the health protests in Whakatane and Tauranga, which were both well attended.

But the composition of those taking part was quite different.

The Whakatane rally was strongly supported by Maori who were well-organised and arrived early in big numbers. Their tino rangatiratanga flags were in evidence.

The participation of young people, and young Maori in particular, was a feature.

At Tauranga, those taking part were almost entirely retired people. There were a few working people and a few very young Maori.

At Whakatane, Labour's Annette King was questioned about the record of the previous Labour government and the influence of Roger Douglas. The workers in the crowd gave her quite a torrid time.

At Tauranga, King received quite an attentive hearing.

□ GEORGE JONES, Kawerau

■ WE WON'T BE SILENCED

I WAS one of 74 students arrested outside Parliament on September 25 for protesting against the "green paper".

Contrary to education minister Wyatt Creech's assertion, the demonstration was very orderly.

White Elephant



EVEN WITH all the marvels of modern communications technology, folks can still get the wrong idea, especially if it happens to be a political idea.

This happened not so long ago, when it was rumoured in a very far-off principality that the best possible form of government in the world was to be found in a place called New Zealand, and the name of this wonderful government was The Coalition.

Now this far-off principality was struggling and poor, but they were also open-minded and keen to learn.

So they packed up their wisest four old sages and flew them over to New Zealand to have a good look at The Coalition and report back, to see if it might improve things if they set up their own Coalition at home.

The four wise sages knew heaps of stuff about philosophy and algebra and what to order in a restaurant when you've only got two dollars and a milk token in your pocket, but they were very, very old, and bit dodderly with it, as well as being completely blind.

So it was a minor miracle that the four found their way down from Auckland airport to the Wellington railway station, where they intended to adjourn to the Beehive.

There, their luck ran out and, taking a wrong turn at the subway they mistakenly boarded the next bus for Newtown Zoo.

At the end of the line the sages got off the bus and marched to the main gate, their sightless eyes gleaming in anticipation.

"Take us to your pride and joy!" they asked the first keeper inside the gate.

Without missing a beat the keeper showed the four sages up to the enclosure of the zoo's latest acquisition - a fine African elephant.

"Is this The Coalition?" asked one of the sages.

But the keeper had already gone back to the main gate, to see why the ticket office was letting pensioners in without paying.

Not being phased at the lack of hospitality, the four sages began to examine the elephant themselves, by feel.

"It's cold and hard," said the sage holding a tusk.

"It keeps twisting and turning," said the sage feeling the trunk. "And it feels like it's going on forever."

The third sage was up against the side of the elephant. "It may seem cold and hard and twisted to you blokes," he said, "and I won't say you're mistaken. But the main impression I get from here is that it's got a hell of a thick hide."

"Its hide is so jolly thick that an ordinary person wouldn't be able to make the slightest impression on it all by themselves."

He felt a bit more. "Yes, it's thick alright, and a bit greasy."

The oldest and wisest sage had kept on examining all this time without saying anything.

He'd worked his way carefully all around the elephant until he came to its backside, unfortunately, at the most inappropriate possible time.

"Never mind all your little details about The Coalition," he spluttered, when he'd recovered enough to speak.

"The main thing about The Coalition is - it's filthy and it stinks, and the sooner the people in this country get rid of it, the better!"

Civic Square.

It attracted some sleek-suited supporters and some student and worker protesters.

Act leader Richard Prebble kept frothing on about how terrible Winston Peters and NZ First are.

But the effect was rather spoiled by his helpers in the crowd handing out the glossy newsheet of ACT women's caucus. This featured an article called "The retirement saving scheme - why women should vote yes".

Prebble claimed to be the main opponent of NZ First, yet he also wanted to support their super scheme which 92% of the country rejected.

Protesters in the crowd loudly highlighted this inconsistency, but the Act leader had no answers for us.

□ NOT FOOLED, Wellington

■ MUCH BIGGER

HANDS UP who thinks the recent announcement of a 5.1% increase in the cost of electricity in Dunedin is a good idea? No?

The grasping electricity companies of Otago preside over the rest of us with impunity and rake in huge profits for their shareholders.

Sole-parent families, students, the unemployed and others on benefits, and the elderly will be big losers of the contemptuous attitude and greed of the power companies.

Next winter when we're huddling around our flat in our sleeping bags because we can't afford to turn on the heater, we can remember this quote about the hike in charges:

"It's much bigger than we'd want" - United Electricity's chief executive Anthony Fowler.

□ KYLE WEBSTER, Dunedin

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Stirring times, fantastic possibilities

LABOUR'S LEADER, Helen Clark, said it on October 3. "The public is rising up against this government."

A union-organised march in Dunedin against hospital cuts and ward closures saw 7,000 take to the streets on September 19.

This was the start of a wave of mass protests that have swept the country.

In Whakatane, 3,000 began a march against hospital budget cuts on October 2. Along its two kilometre route it doubled in size to 6,000.

Government MPs stayed away, while Act deputy leader Ken Shirley was booed off the stage for supporting the Coalition.

Two days later, deputy prime minister Winston Peters was abused on his home turf by the angriest crowd the Tauranga Greypower president had ever seen.

They were outraged by a \$4 million funding cut to Tauranga Hospital.

Marches in Whangarei, Greytown, Blenheim and elsewhere show how anger at the Coalition's health cuts extends all round NZ.

The same anger has been seen in increasingly militant student actions against fee rises and the Coalition's privatisation plans for tertiary education.

Arrests

On September 25, in the grounds of Parliament, 400 students were "heaved" by an army of police.

74 were arrested on trespass charges as a panicky Coalition over-reacted to a peaceful demonstration.

The mass arrests enraged Wellington students. The stand-over tactics of the authorities backfired when five times more students participated in a 2,000-strong demonstration at Parliament on October 1.

Auckland University students staged two occupations of their Registry. 500 had a go on October 1, and numbers tripled to 1,500 a week later.

In the course of the

week, the students went from the defensive to the offensive when the police used violence to clear them away from the Registry.

Because of these experiences, the idea of nationwide campus occupations no longer seems unattainable to many students.

And there's now serious talk of not just halting the latest fee rise, but also getting rid of all fees along with the Coalition government.

People everywhere are rising up in actions, which are driving deep wedges into the Coalition.

Outcry

The huge outcry over the plight of Rau Williams pushed NZ First deputy leader Tau Henare into criticising his own government's health cuts.

The massive march in Whakatane caused NZ First associate health minister John Delamere to say that "closing or downgrading Whakatane Hospital is not an option", which brought him into conflict with National health minister Bill English.

National MP John Banks is a red-neck Right-winger from way back. Yet he's slammed the health rationing caused by government underfunding which has killed Rau Williams.

There's been heaps of other instances of disunity, disarray and demoralisation within a Coalition under mass siege.

The marvellous wave of protests that's badly damaged the Coalition is set to build further.

There's a "cross sector" march to demand fresh elections taking place in Auckland on October 16.

Health marches are coming up in Auckland, Wellington, Rotorua, Nelson, Invercargill and elsewhere.

The National Health Action Day, on December 12, will see demonstrations in all cities. It's a fantastic chance for health workers to march in uniform and become the core of the struggle to kick the market out of health.

These kind of actions can build into a revolt that drives such deep splits in the Coalition that the government is brought down.

And things can go even

further. If the revolt continues to grow, it may roll back the "more market" madness rammed down our throats for the last thirteen years.

The "more market" fanatics spout the lie that "the consumer" is all-powerful. In reality, consumers have as much power as they have money to spend. Under the market, consumer power is the power of the wealthy.

The protests flaring up around the country show it's collective action which gives people like us real power.

These are stirring times. There are fantastic possibilities so long as we do two things:

- Step up the actions to kick out the government.
- Put the boot into the market so no other party can take over where the Coalition left off.

What we need from Labour

OPINION POLLS show that support for Labour is soaring.

The latest NBR-Consultus poll puts Labour an incredible 22 points ahead of National. Helen Clark's party now has enough electoral support - 50% - to govern on its own.

Labour's rise is giving hope to working class people everywhere.

But it's grassroots actions that are fuelling this shift to the Left. After all, Labour isn't doing anything different from 18 months ago when it was languishing in the polls.

People change their views

Who do you believe?

"It's springtime again in New Zealand."

■ Prime minister Jim Bolger, October 2.

"The Coalition has the odour of death about it."

■ National Business Review, the government's most enthusiastic media backer, October 3.

when they see a positive alternative. And that alternative has largely been created by the demonstrators who've taken to the streets in growing numbers this year and shoved the Coalition onto the back foot.

Labour began its rise early in 1997 along with the rise in the mood of anger which began to spill over into more protests.

When, over recent weeks, the number of demonstrations soared, the swing to Labour accelerated.

Labour and Alliance MPs have been cheered by the huge crowds who've rallied against the Coalition's health cuts.

Although they've lined up to speak at rallies, they still put their emphasis on verbal diarrhoea in Parliament, not on building a grassroots fightback. Yet it's been mass actions which have turned the tide against the Right - not the Parliamentary actions of Labour and its ally, the Alliance.

It's unacceptable that not a single Labour or Alliance MP attended the two Auckland University occupations earlier this month. Hundreds of students bravely resisted police attacks - but Labour wasn't there.

When Alliance education spokesperson Liz Gordon wanted to issue a media statement support-

ing the first Auckland occupation, she was gagged by party leader Jim Anderton.

Outside Parliament, on September 25, senior Labour MP Steve Maharey was soundly booed when he told students they'd made their point and should pack up their protest.

It was good that Alliance industrial relations spokesperson Laila Harre turned up to last month's picket of JNL's head office by strikers from the company's Kaitiaki plant. But when the workers broke into the head office to put their demands to management, Harre slipped quietly away.

The best way for Labour and Alliance MPs to promote the death of the Coalition is for them to push for bigger mass actions. Here's some things they should be doing:

- Ask health workers to strike on December 12, the National Health Action Day.
- Call for illegal strikes to turn the anti-worker Contracts Act into a dead letter.
- Help health workers to occupy hospital wards facing closure.
- Participate in student occupations to defeat fees and privatisation.
- Support state tenants on SHAC's partial rent strike who're defying the Coalition's market rents policy. But Labour and the Alli-

ance aren't doing these things.

Instead, just a couple of weeks ago, Helen Clark revealed her instructions to caucus to prune back Labour's 1996 list of spending promises. This, she said, will mean "hard choices".

Talk of "hard choices" is the sort of language we've endured under Right-wing governments since 1984. We don't want the same rhetoric from Labour.

We want a Labour government to tax the rich so the cuts to health, education and welfare over the last 13 years can be reversed.

But Labour's economic spokesperson, Michael Cullen, is talking sweetly to business groups about how his government won't raise taxes. And last June, Jim Anderton said the Alliance should soften its tax rates on the rich.

Neither party is promising to give workers the right to strike at any time to defend their interests.

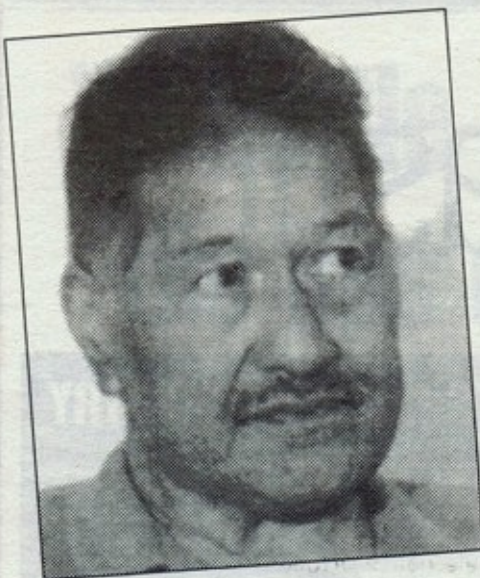
People taking actions against the Coalition and employers should demand backing from Labour and the Alliance.

Winning support from these two parties helps to build the revolt against the Coalition. And building the revolt puts pressure on Helen Clark not to prune back Labour's promises and on Jim Anderton not to soften taxes on the rich.

AUCKLAND STUDENTS OCCUPY REGISTRY



ON OCTOBER 1, Auckland students occupied their Registry from four different entry points. They were evicted by police, but the experience energised the student movement. See report on back page.



Auckland health march, November 11

The day health workers should strike

by GRANT MORGAN

THE HEALTH unions are the key to building a mass movement to defend public health that's so powerful it stops the cuts and undermines the Coalition.

The biggest health marches to date, in Dunedin and Whakatane, saw the health unions play a central role.

Now pay talks between the Nurses Organisation and Auckland Healthcare, the country's largest CHE, have broken down. As part of its hospital funding cuts, the government is insisting that health authorities freeze workers' pay unless they can get rid of staff or slash wages elsewhere.

Acting on the Coalition's orders, Auckland Healthcare is attempting to split the solidarity of nurses. Its managers are offering a rise to higher-ranked nurses, but only if junior nurses take pay cuts.

Yet these junior nurses are already paid less than their colleagues working for other Auckland CHEs. New graduates are on \$14.05 an hour, compared with \$14.72 at South Auckland Health and \$14.38 at Waitemata Health.

It looks likely that the CHE's negotiations with the Public Service Association will also founder by the end of October.

Opportunity

This gives a fantastic opportunity for the health unions to legally call all their Auckland Healthcare members out on strike on November 11, the date of Auckland's march against health cuts. Imagine the impact if thousands of uniformed health workers participated in the march in Aotearoa's largest city.

It's a wonderful chance to link the Coalition's cuts to health services with its attempt to impose a pay freeze on health workers. A strike ballot is now being held by the Nurses Organisation. It seems likely to deliver a "yes" verdict.

If so, then the time to strike would be on November 11, joining the Auckland health march.

Because of their professional responsibilities, nurses have a natural reluctance to strike for any length of time.

However, there are other sorts of mass actions that they can initiate to put pressure on the Coalition and CHE managers.

Health workers, with support from their own and other hospital unions, could keep providing services in defiance of management orders to stop.

They could occupy wards threatened with closure to keep them running.

They could organise regular demonstrations attended by off-duty hospital staff as well as the general public.

Support

If health workers show they're prepared to fight, then this will generate more public opposition to the health cuts and more public support for their pay claims.

And, when health workers take mass actions, they can have an immediate and dramatic impact on how a hospital is run and what services it offers.

Following the Dunedin march, for instance, the Otago CHE backed down from its plan to close ward 6C on December 1. Now the ward will stay open until there are sufficient alternative services for people with psychiatric illnesses.

If health workers break the pay freeze, then the Coalition's hardline restrictions on hospital funding will be in tatters. This will help the fight to retain services.

This is an empowering strategy. It's centred around a large group of workers whose industrial punch could threaten the future of the Coalition.

We charge the Coalition with Rau's murder!

by GRANT MORGAN

RAU WILLIAMS was sentenced to death because he wasn't rich enough to afford private life-saving dialysis treatment.

During his working life as a freezing worker, Rau added more real value to the economy than the paper-shufflers in Treasury who're drawing up the blueprints for the Coalition's health cuts.

Yet, because they're part of the ruling elite, these bureaucrats and politicians can afford the best medical care that money can buy. There's no rationing for those at the top.

The market delivers fabulous riches to the bosses and bankers who run the economy – and to the bureaucrats and politicians who keep the profits rolling into the pockets of the wealthy few.

They don't give a stuff about people like Rau. The cold-blooded decision to let Rau die is a direct result of government funding restrictions.

Rationing

Dr Martin Searle, chair of the NZ Nephrology Group which represents all renal

"We've got to get rid of capitalism before it kills us."

physicians, said the guidelines which excluded Rau were set because of limited funding.

Although it's often "inhumane", said Searle, that's "part and parcel of having rationing".

Yet, for the last five years, the government has been boasting about its multi-billion dollar surpluses. So there's no financial excuse to let people perish for lack of medical treatment.

But the capitalists are demanding that these surpluses fund tax reductions on top incomes. This, they insist, is vital for the profitability of business.

We've got to get rid of capitalism before it kills us.

That's no exaggeration. The Coalition has just announced a hospital "booking system" that will immediately exclude one-third of sufferers from necessary operations.

Government MPs have the audacity to praise this as a "fairer" system. In reality, it will inflict an epidemic of avoidable suffering and early deaths on

working class people.

Capitalism's market-based rationing is inhumane. People don't get goods and services on the basis of their human needs, but on the size of their bank balance.

Dictatorship

It's a dictatorship of money – and that means a dictatorship by the class controlling the economy.

Hardship, unemployment and insecurity are blighting our lives, yet the Coalition's tax handouts to the rich will slash even more health, education and welfare services.

The Coalition, acting on the impulses of the market, is responsible for killing Rau Williams. The government and the filthy few who profit from the market should be held accountable.

We charge the Coalition with Rau's murder!

There's massive anger at government restrictions on hospital funding, which impose health rationing on those who can't afford to "go private".

And there's burning hatred of words like "the market" and "privatisation".

We need to turn this anger into positive mass actions that kick the market out of health – and every other area of human life.

We need to fight for a sharing, caring society which values everybody, rather than a market-driven, profiteering world where the productive majority get treated like shit.

Vision

This vision of a better future is made more real by heroes like Jim Shortland and other members of Rau's whanau and support group who campaigned tirelessly to save him.

They didn't fight for Rau because there was a buck in it for them. They did it because they valued Rau as a human being.

It's this humanistic vision which is at the centre of socialism.

Socialists fight for a democratic, cooperative world where we control our own lives, instead of being under the thumb of an inhumane market.

Join the socialists and make a difference!

Tidal wave of health protests can swamp Coalition

WHAKATANE MARCH against hospital cuts. October 2. The rare sight of a Labour placard in a demonstration (centre) is an indication of the growing popularity of the party that gave us Rogernomics last time round.



TWO VERY different cities, two huge demonstrations against health cuts – and the same revolt against the Coalition.

In Whakatane a tino rangatiratanga flag was at the front of the march, while in Tauranga the New Zealand ensign led the way.

Lots of young and Maori people in Whakatane, predominantly elderly and Pakeha at Tauranga.

The Nurses Organisation played the key organising role in Whakatane, Greypower in Tauranga.

Quite a few Maori language anti-Coalition slogans at Whakatane, while the Greypower president in Tauranga said many opposed NZ First because they saw it as a "Maori party".

Yet, for all these differences, both demonstrations were united in their hatred of the Coalition and its "more market" health policies.

Whakatane is a lot more working class and ethnically integrated than Tauranga, traditionally one of the most conservative electorates in the country.

Never before have Whakatane and Tauranga marched in step like this.

When huge numbers of people in such different cities converge in one stream of protest against the government, you know there's a political sea-change of mammoth proportions taking place.

We're seeing the start of a mass revolt from below. There's a real possibility that the Coalition can be put under so much pressure that it folds before election time.

It's vital to step up the pressure with more mass actions.

WHAKATANE

"Why not turn the Beehive into a public hospital?"

"YOU CUT, we die."

That was the blunt message directed at the Coalition by one protester in a massive march to save Whakatane Hospital.

The October 2 procession doubled in size to 6,000 over its two-kilometre route. Hundreds more lined the streets to show their support. These are amazing numbers in a town with a population less than 20,000.

Local health unions played a major role in organising the march.

Whakatane Hospital's surgery services are under serious threat. The regional CHE won't be buying some services because of government funding restrictions.

Cor Ouwehand, who took his grandson on the march, stated: "It's not just me the changes will affect, it's my grandson as well. You have to think about everybody's future and not just your own."

Ouwehand's collectivist sentiments, which reflected the general mood, amount to a rejection of the "more market" philosophy behind the government's health policies.

Whakatane mayor Tony Bonne also marched – "for the first time in my life," he revealed.

"There is obviously a move towards

privatisation of health services," said the mayor.

No politicians from National and NZ First showed up.

Tuakiri Delamere, the NZ First associate health minister whose Maori electorate embraces the region around Whakatane, wouldn't face his home crowd. He remained in Wellington.

Alliance leader Jim Anderson was well received. He declared: "All the signs point to privatisation of the health service which the people of New Zealand don't want."

He said the government had lost its "moral way".

Anderson is right to point to the government's privatisation agenda. But he's letting the government off lightly when he suggests it has simply lost its "moral way".

The Right-wing fanatics running the government are out to privatise health because that will increase the flow of profits to the wealthy elite they've always served.

The crowd was a lot angrier than the Alliance leader. When Act deputy leader Ken Shirley claimed that his party wasn't siding with the government, he was booed off the podium by a crowd loudly hostile to his Right-wing bullshit.

And renegade Alliance MP Alamein Kopu was likewise booed off the stage.

Although Labour health spokesperson Annette King got a mostly sympathetic hearing, she copped interjections about the Rogernomics betrayal last time her party won office.

Rena Savage, a 20-year-old wheelchair-bound cerebral palsy sufferer who depends on Whakatane Hospital, stated: "They should

"At present we have got too many people who live in hope that they will get an operation because they are on a waiting list"

■ Health minister Bill English, 7.10.97

take the money intended for the Parliament building and spend it on health. Or why not turn the Beehive into a public hospital?"

Her words expressed popular revulsion against politicians making decisions which worsen our lives just so the rich can get richer.

TAURANGA

Peters jeered by home crowd

EAR SPLITTING boos and jeers greeted Winston Peters when he fronted up to a home crowd rally on October 4 against health cuts.

Several people moved towards the deputy prime minister, shouting angrily. An elderly man poked him on the shoulder as he gave Peters an earful.

There were derogatory comments and placards about "Winnie the Pooh".

This is an amazing turnaround in a traditionally conservative electorate that, just a year ago, elected Peters in a landslide vote.

The latest opinion poll shows him a distant third in Tauranga. Labour is out in front, but almost half the electorate remains undecided.

Labour hasn't won in Tauranga since 1938.

5,000 joined the march organised by Greypower after a \$4 million funding cut was imposed on Tauranga Hospital. They chanted: "What do we want? Access for all!"

Nurses were ordered not to wear uniforms on the march. A few defied this management decree, while most made their identity plain by wearing old-style nursing caps which are no longer regulated.

Age Concern president Shirley Gulliver said she'd never taken to the streets before, but was enraged with what was happening to the health system.

It was also the first protest march for retired policeman Ray Ruane, who said he'd always "been on the other side of the fence".

For most of the mainly elderly crowd, it was the first time they'd taken part in a demonstration.

When Peters began speaking at the rally, he was met with a storm of interjections. "Liars!" "Shame!" "Bullshit!" "You're history's biggest con artist!"

Continuous heckling at times drowned out his words, despite the powerful sound system.

Even when Peters said the Coalition had introduced free health care for kids under six, he was booed.

Greypower speakers received massive applause when they called for a snap election.

The crowd reacted angrily when apologies were announced from National MPs Tony Ryall and Katherine O'Regan, and NZ First's associate health minister Tuakiri Delamere.

Afterwards, Peters told reporters: "I fully expected exactly what I got."

His party just needed to get its message across better, claimed the NZ First leader. "It's all a matter of communication."

But Tauranga's Greypower president John Jefferson, a former political ally of Peters, said he'd never seen such anger before.

"Being the treasurer, he holds the purse strings, and they see him as responsible."

Jefferson said that, while health cuts was the immediate issue, general discontent with NZ First had fuelled the anger.

The elderly who'd looked to Peters as their "messiah" now felt a sense of "betrayal", said the Greypower president.

National list MP Katherine O'Regan, who's set up an electorate office in Tauranga, would have been similarly booed if she had turned up, said Jefferson.

A former NZ First committee member said he wouldn't be voting for Peters again. "Most people were NZ First, now there's hardly one who would vote for him again."

Clearly, no amount of slick "communication" by NZ First or its Coalition partner will turn the tide.

There's incredible anger at the marketisation of health and the consequent restriction of medical care to low-to-medium income families.

The people with the "communication" problem are the Coalition and its Right-wing allies in Act who pretend not to hear the roar of outrage at their "more market" madness.

Will Labour deliver?

THE LABOUR Party is promising a new deal on public health.

That's good. But it would be a big, big mistake to sit back and wait for them to get elected onto the Treasury benches. Here's why:

Senior Labour MP Steve Maharey says: "The issue of healthcare will bring down the government. However, there's a real chance that the Coalition will kill the health system first."

Unless the Coalition is stopped, dozens of public hospitals could have had the guts ripped out of them by the time of the next election in October 1999.

The only way to stop the government is by mass actions which apply so much pressure from below that the Coalition cracks up.

And can Labour, which gave us Rogernomics last time when Helen Clark was in cabinet, be trusted to deliver for us this time around?

The problem with Labour is that it's always in a contradictory position.

Labour says that it stands for social justice, but claims this can only be achieved through the market economy. Yet it's the market which continuously causes massive social injustice.

So will Labour choose the market over justice, or the other way around?

Clark says that Labour will be much more cautious about what it offers than it was in the 1996 election because of declining government surpluses.

The declining surpluses are caused partly by tax cuts for the rich and partly by an economic slowdown.

Clark says she will be instructing her caucus to prune back Labour's 1996 list of spending promises.

This exercise, the Labour leader admits, will be full of "hard choices".

She's moving towards the "promise-them-nothing-concrete" strategy of Tony Blair, the leader of the British Labour Party.

We should demand specific promises by Labour that it will tax the rich to fix our hospitals and all other public services.

And we should insist that all Labour MPs throw themselves into building every march, every strike, every occupation aimed at defending public health.

The only way to push Labour into delivering is the same method we must use to beat the Coalition – mass actions from below.

MARCHING FOR CHANGE

OVER THE last few weeks, health marches have taken place in many centres, including Dunedin, Whakatane, Tauranga, Blenheim, Greytown and Whangarei.

Other health marches are coming up in Auckland, Wellington, Rotorua, Nelson and Invercargill.

On December 12 there will be a National Health Action Day, with simultaneous marches in all centres.

It already has the support of organisations with a combined membership of 300,000.

It's been many years since Aotearoa has seen such mass protests.

A tidal wave of marchers want an end to market madness in health.

Join the Marches

Jointly organised by Greypower, health unions and health action groups.

■ **WELLINGTON**

October 29, 10am-noon. Rally at Michael Fowler Centre. March afterwards.

■ **ROTORUA**

October 29. March from Rotorua Hospital to Convention

Centre. Rally at noon.

■ **AUCKLAND**

November 11, noon. Rally at Aotea Square. March afterwards down Queen Street.

■ **NATIONAL HEALTH ACTION DAY**

December 12. Marches in all centres.

WHAT THE PLACARDS SAID...

WHAKATANE

- "Stop cutting, start caring"
- "Spend on health, not on your bloody Beehive"
- "No hospital, no life"
- "Hands off our hospital"
- "Save our services"

TAURANGA

- "Nurses say no"
- "Governed by stealth"
- "Rebuild hospitals, not Beehives"
- "Tauranga deserts Winston"
- "Where is the Decent Society?"
- "Sack MPs, not nurses"
- "Coalition – money or your life"

1934 Teamster Rebellion turned tide against US bosses

"A battle cry on the lips of every worker"

AOTEAROA, 1991: Workers everywhere were demonstrating and calling for a General Strike to stop National passing the Employment Contracts law.

Tragically, the leadership of the Council of Trade Unions refused to do so, and the tremendous potential of the workers' upsurge was wasted.

Workers have been paying dearly ever since for our leaders' refusal to organise a united fightback.

Now there's another chance. There's an upturn in workers' confidence, the Coalition is in tatters and there's a shift to the Left as support flows strongly to Labour.

The Socialist Workers Organisation is calling on union leaders to convene a National Convention of Job Delegates to plan a united fightback against the Contracts Act.

The CTU's national conference is this month. Will CTU leaders prove their worth to workers by taking up our call?

The 1934 Teamster Rebellion in America shows what can be done when a fighting working class gets the fighting leadership it deserves – particularly the leadership of revolutionary socialists.

We should apply the lessons to Aotearoa today.

by JENNIFER ROESCH

AT THE start of 1934, the American city of Minneapolis was a bosses' town.

Nearly 40% of workers were jobless and the Citizens Alliance, grouping the city's most powerful employers, was ready to fight any unionisation drive.

But there was also a tradition of workers' struggles in Minneapolis whose most committed activists had been leading members of the Communist Party.

Many of them were expelled for their opposition to Joseph Stalin's dictatorial rule in Russia. They formed the Communist League of America (CLA), building a branch of 40 in Minneapolis by 1933.

The Minneapolis CLA members set out to organise the city's workers, starting with the trucking industry.

Partly, this choice was coincidence – the CLA had five members working in Local (branch) 574 of the Teamsters union.

But there were other factors.

Local 574 was a "general" local, with its membership consisting of workers who weren't covered by other branches.

The looseness of this charter meant that an organising drive could follow the principles of "industrial unionism" – organising all workers involved in trucking, regardless of whether they were drivers or worked "inside" loading trucks.

Although the Teamsters were a craft union led by a conservative, Daniel Tobin, Local 574's president Bill Brown was a union militant who welcomed the energy and organising skills of the socialists.

THE ORGANISING drive began where the local already had a base – with coal truck drivers.

After months of painstaking organising work, the coal drivers drew up a list of demands in February 1934.

When the employers refused to meet them, the union shut down 65 of the city's 67 coal yards.

Workers organised flying pickets to stop scab drivers and to reinforce picket lines whenever there was a conflict with police.

In the dead of winter and with coal in short supply, the employers were forced to cave in within three days, conceding union elections.

ceding union elections.

Farrell Dobbs, one of the first recruits to the organising drive and later the author of *Teamster Rebellion*, a brilliant account of the strike, pointed out the significance of this victory:

"For the first time in many years, a strike had been won in Minneapolis. Electrified by the victory, union members throughout the city gained self-confidence, and thousands of unorganised workers looked to the union movement with a new sense of hope."

With one success under their belt, Local 574 set out to organise the rest of the trucking industry.

Rank-and-file workers formed a voluntary organising committee, sending out teams of workers to recruit new members.

They talked to workers about joining the union and asked them what demands should be pushed. As a result, organisers gained a solid understanding of the grievances in each particular section of the industry.

In just a few months, many thousands of workers had joined Local 574. At one public meeting, an incredible 3,000 new members signed up.

The workers elected a strike committee and set an April 30 deadline for the employers to meet their demands for a closed shop, shorter hours and higher pay.

Local 574's demands were rejected by the Citizens Alliance.

Two weeks later, the union went on strike. It was one of the best organised strikes in the history of the US labour movement.

Workers built alliances with unemployed groups, and the local formed a women's auxiliary which played a critical role in the struggle.

The local rented a garage to be used as strike headquarters. It included a hospital for injured strikers and a commissary which fed thousands of workers.

The flying pickets from February became the heart of the May strike.

An army of vehicles, borrowed from workers across the city, was placed at the command of elected picket captains.

Teams of strikers and supporters were stationed around the city to report the movement of any trucks.

Whenever a scab truck was spotted, workers radioed to headquarters, and squads of cars were dispatched to meet it.



TEAMSTERS ARMED with batons advance on the cops

By the second day, Minneapolis ground to a halt.

The Citizens Alliance decided to use police violence against the strikers.

On May 19, police trapped unarmed picketers in a narrow ally and savagely attacked them, injuring many.

Until this point, workers had picketed unarmed. Now they began to arm themselves in anticipation of further clashes with the police.

A FEW days later, workers set a trap for the cops.

When police tried to move scab trucks through the city's main market, 600 strikers hidden in a nearby union hall fell on them.

The cops were driven out of the square, and more than 30 were put in hospital.

Police were ready for a showdown next day. They armed hundreds of anti-union zealots and again tried to force trucks through at the market.

20,000 union supporters jammed the area to help stop the trucks.

When police made their move, a truckload of picketers drove straight into the market and jumped the cops, driving them back.

The "Battles of Deputies' Run" was broadcast live on radio, like a college football game.

The battle marked a turning point in the strike.

A few days later, the Citizens Alliance agreed to a compromise that provided for union recognition as well as seniority rights and wage arbitration.

The victory boosted the confidence of the city's workers.

But Local 574's organisers knew the compromise couldn't last because the employers would force a more decisive battle.

The key issue was the "inside" workers. The Citizens Alliance, backed up by the state Labour Board, refused to recognise them as part of the union.

As this issue reached a head, the union began to prepare for a new strike.

The Citizens Alliance struck back with a red-baiting campaign.

The union's national leader, Daniel Tobin, gave them ammunition. In the Teamsters' paper he urged Minneapolis members to get rid of "the semi-monsters creeping into our midst... creating distrust, discontent, bloodshed and rebellion".

The employers wasted no time in reprinting the attack as an ad in the local paper.

Organisers took swift action to consolidate the union's strength, calling a membership meeting which again voted to strike and declared its full confidence in the organizing committee.

Workers also organised a rank-and-file committee which was given full authority over the strike. Rank-and-file

ers made reluctant union officials accountable to the membership by incorporating them into the committee.

On July 17, the union again went into battle.

This time they had a new weapon – a daily strike paper called *The Organiser*.

Edited by CLA members, *The Organiser* each day countered the bosses' propaganda and set out new steps in the strike.

ON "BLOODY Friday", police opened fire on unarmed picketers.

The police, Dobbs reports, "were shooting in all directions, hitting most of their victims in the back as they tried to escape, and clubbing the wounded after they fell".

67 were injured and two died in the coldblooded attack.

But the massacre only strengthened workers' will.

"You thought you would shoot Local 574 into oblivion," *The Organiser* declared. "But you only succeeded in making 574 a battle cry on the lips of every working man and woman in Minneapolis."

A few days later, 40,000 workers joined a funeral march to strike headquarters.

By this point, federal mediators were anxious to end the strike because it had captured the imagination of workers throughout the country.

They proposed a settlement which would give the union the right to represent all trucking workers if it won federally-supervised elections.

Minnesota governor Floyd Olson – head of the state's Farmer-Labour Party which claimed to defend workers' interests – also wanted a quick end to the strike.

Olson threatened to impose martial law if the two sides didn't accept the agreement.

The union promptly accepted, but the employers refused.

Olson declared martial law and sent in the National Guard. The troops began by regulating traffic in the city, but very soon were acting as strikebreakers by protecting the movement of trucks.

Local 574 issued an ultimatum – no trucks move or the strikers would resume picketing.

Olson retaliated by ordering the National Guard to occupy strike headquarters and arrest the workers' top leaders.

But the struggles of the past months had created hundreds of new organisers, who took over running the strike.

In the face of this strength, Olson retreated, ordering the release of strike leaders and an end to the National Guard's scabbing operation.

After this showdown, the strike developed into a drawn-out war of attrition.

As days went by, strike leaders feared they were losing the momentum. Even some CLA leaders argued that the strike should be called off.

But those socialists most involved with the rank-and-file argued that the workers remained strong and the employers were showing cracks.

Sure enough, the employers caved in a few weeks later, giving Local 574 a total victory.

The Teamster Rebellion was a huge step forward for the labour movement.

It inspired workers across the country and prepared them for the great union organising drives of a few years later.

Socialist Workers Organisation meetings

☐ Auckland

Meets every Tuesday at 7.30pm at the Socialist Centre, 86 Princes St, Onehunga. Phone 634 3984 or write to Box 8851, Auckland.

☐ Timberlands

Meets every second Wednesday of each month at 7pm at Apurmoana marae, Tarawera Rd. Phone Bernie 345 9853

☐ Wellington

Meets every Wednesday at 7.30 pm in the meeting hall behind St Peters Church, corner Ghuznee & Willis St. Phone Gordon 568 7474

☐ Christchurch

Meets every second Thursday at 7.30 pm at the WEA, 59 Gloucester St. Phone Roy 384 4681

☐ Australia

International Socialists at PO Box A338, Sydney South, ph 261 4862.

The Socialist Workers Organisation also has members and supporters in North Shore, Hamilton, Paeroa, Napier, Kawerau, Raglan, Palmerston North, Timaru, Dunedin and the West Coast. They can be contacted via the Socialist Centre in Auckland (09) 634 3984.

Socialism
Capitalism is a system of exploitation which generates inequality, crisis and war.

Although workers create society's wealth, it is controlled by the ruling class for its own selfish ends.

Socialism can only be built when the working class takes control of social wealth and democratically plans its production and distribution to meet human needs, not private profits. This will eliminate all class divisions in society.

Stalinist countries such as China and Cuba, just like the former Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc, have nothing to do with socialism. They are state capitalist. We support the struggles of workers against every dictatorial stalinist ruling class.

Revolution not reformism
The present system cannot be reformed to end exploitation and oppression, contrary to what Alliance, Labour and union leaders claim. It must be overthrown by the working class.

Capitalism's parliament, army, police and judiciary protect the ruling class. These institutions cannot be taken over and used by the working class.

To pave the way to socialism the working class needs a new kind of state - a democratic workers state based on workers councils and workers militia.

Internationalism
Workers in every country are exploited by capitalism, so the struggle for socialism is global.

We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries. We fight racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls. We support all genuine national liberation struggles.

We are internationalists because socialism depends on spreading working class revolutions around the world.

Liberation from oppression
We fight for democratic rights. We oppose the oppression of women, Maori, Pacific Islanders, lesbians and gays.

All forms of oppression are used to divide the working class. We support the right of all oppressed groups to organise for their own defence. Their liberation is essential to socialist revolution and impossible without it.

Tino rangatiratanga
We support the struggle for Maori self-determination. The government's approach to Treaty claims has benefited a Maori elite while doing little for working class Maori.

Tino rangatiratanga cannot be achieved within capitalism. It will only become a reality with the establishment of a workers state.

Revolutionary party
To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a mass revolutionary socialist party.

We are in the early stages of building such a party through involvement in the day-to-day struggles of workers and the oppressed.

The Socialist Workers Organisation must grow in size and influence to provide leadership in the struggle for working class self-emancipation.

We need to revitalise the unions with a rank-and-file movement.

If you like our ideas and want to fight for socialism, then join us.

Outside Auckland University's Registry, October 1



○ The not so invisible "hand of the market". The police enforce unaffordable student fees. Bigger numbers can beat them. For details see p8.

Gay Rights

HERO Parade supporters took over a recent Auckland City Council meeting, forcing mayor Les Mills to walk out.

They were protesting the council's decision to withdraw \$15,000 funding from the event.

The Hero Parade is the highlight of an annual festival celebrating Auckland's gay and lesbian subculture.

The conservative Christian faction that dominates the council have long maintained opposition to it.

Protest organiser Lisa Prager accused the council of being out-of-touch, while other protesters warned that the "extremely Right-wing and Christian" councillors would be voted out at next year's local body elections.

Waipa Mill

FLETCHER CHALLENGE has announced that it will make 110 workers at its Waipa timber mill redundant.

The mill is one of the assets jointly bought by Fletcher, Brierley and the Chinese government at a bargain basement price last year from the government-owned Forestry Corporation.

At the time of the deal, both the government and the new owners promised there wouldn't be any layoffs. Instead, they claimed that hundreds of new jobs would be created.

Fletcher contends that the mill is losing \$8 million in its latest financial year, and that old technology and "restrictive work practices" make the site unprofitable.

But mill workers don't believe this, pointing out that Waipa was profitable under the old Forestry Corp.

They say the real reason for the job cuts is their refusal to sign a new employment contract that will slash wages and conditions.

Babcock

THE SETTLEMENT of the Babcock contract, after 11-day lockout, has resulted in acrimony between the unions involved.

Ray Bianchi, secretary of

the Amalgamated Workers Union, accused the two larger unions, the Public Service Association and the Engineers Union, of taking "blood money" from their colleagues.

Instead of receiving up to \$20,000 each from the money Babcock offered to buy out allowances from the old contract, some labourers, painters and boilermakers were forced to share the money with all 270 workers on site.

This was the result of a negotiating proposal from the Engineers, and supported by the PSA.

Each worker was ultimately paid out \$1,326. The 15 AWU members on site were amongst the biggest losers in the deal.

The disbursement of the buy-out money was agreed without input from the workers affected.

PSA organiser Wayne Parkinson said that, in hindsight, he would have taken the offer back to the members "and let them debate it".

JNL Triboard

STRIKE ACTION against JNL Triboard in Kaitia is about to enter its third month, and there's still no end in sight.

Workers walked out the gates on August 18 against major clawbacks to pay and conditions. The company's contract would mean wage cuts of 10 to 17% per worker. This would take over \$1 million a year from an already depressed local economy.

Despite the pressure of financial hardship, morale on the picket line continues to hold.

A victory in this dispute would mean a major defeat for the union-busting tactics of JNL and companies like it.

Donations to the strike fund are needed to help the striking workers triumph.

● Take up collections on your job and send to JNL workers c/- Wood Industries Union, Box 149, Rotorua.

Seafarers

PORTS OF Auckland has accused the Seafarers Union of using "terrorist-type activity" to halt port

operations.

The company plans to sue the union for damages.

Tauranga, Wellington and Lyttelton port companies may join the action, along with other firms claiming to have suffered a financial loss.

The union is running a campaign of flying pickets targeting cross-traders - "flag of convenience" shippers who refuse to use New Zealand or Australian crew on the trans-Tasman route.

So far, the Seafarers Union has won some victories in its campaign, helped by the refusal of waterside workers to cross their pickets. This has caused costly delays to shipping companies and the ports.

● Support the seafarers. Phone Auckland (09) 303 2562, Wellington (04) 499 0436, Christchurch (03) 288 784.

Beehive Petition

A NEW petition against the government's plan to shift the Beehive continues to gain strength.

It was launched by Susan Grimsdell, organiser of the successful petition against the so-called "parliamentary palace".

In response to the unpopularity of its initial proposal to build a \$90 million ministerial office behind Parliament, the government has come up with an even more extravagant plan.

It intends to shift the Beehive and build an extension onto the original parliament buildings, which will cost \$165 million.

The petition opposes the government spending money on new accommodation for MPs and ministers and demands that "priority be given to the needs of the citizens of New Zealand".

● For more information, phone (09) 415 9122 or (09) 576 3036.

Civil rights

SEVERAL GOVERNMENT agencies have told the Government it shouldn't exempt itself from human rights legislation.

Women's Affairs, Pacific Island Affairs, the State Services Commission, the

Human Rights Commission and the Race Relations Conciliator have all voiced opposition to the government exempting itself from the Human Rights Act.

Despite this, the Coalition is determined to push ahead with the exemption. It's demanding that these agencies provide the government with information on how it could implement such an exemption.

Meanwhile, the Auckland Council for Civil Liberties is coordinating moves to defend the Human Rights Act.

● For more information, write to ACCL, Box 6582, Wellesley St, Auckland.

Whistleblowers Bill

A BILL before parliament designed to protect whistleblowers will exclude employees of private sector organisations.

The original draft of the Protected Disclosures Bill included both public and private sectors.

However, the report back to parliament of the government administration select committee has recommended that its coverage be confined to the state sector only.

The legislation's protection clauses therefore become less relevant with every transfer of a government service into private hands.

The bill was introduced by the government in the aftermath of the Neil Pugmire affair, where a psychiatric nurse was disciplined by his employer for speaking out over the release of a patient he considered unsafe.

This person shortly after committed a serious crime of violence.

Bulk Funding

PRIME MINISTER Jim Bolger has signalled his determination to press ahead with bulk funding of teachers' salaries.

Bulk funding opens the door to funding reductions to schools and eventual privatisation.

Bolger bitterly attacked the secondary teachers' union, the PPTA, for its opposition to bulk funding.

He declared: "Monopolistic teacher unions have no place in the provision of modern education."

Bolger's headline rhetoric comes after PPTA president Martin Cooney had offered to hold private talks with education minister Wyatt Creech in an attempt to find neutral ground on the bulk funding issue.

Cooney also suggested that the talks be held under the conditions of a "media blackout".

PPTA members should be wary of secretive talks, however.

With a public revolt growing against the most unpopular government in NZ history, the union has everything to gain by continuing to fight an open battle against bulk funding and the privatisation of education.

Both primary and secondary teachers need to fight together in the looming contract round. A united fight by both unions could kill bulk funding, despite Bolger's bluster.

Green Bay protests rock Telecom

by BARRY LEE



GREEN BAY Primary's staff, trustees and parents are continuing their battle against Telecom's plan to install a cell phone transmitter next to their school.

Several months ago, Telecom had agreed to call a halt while mediation with the Auckland school took place.

However, Telecom secretly began ordering materials and preparing to proceed with installation.

News leaked out and sparked two 700-strong marches and daily pickets outside the intended site at Koala Motors.

Since the protests, Telecom hasn't gone ahead, but neither has it backed down over the site.

Telecom has refused the offer of two alternative sites in the area. Why? It's widely believed by Green Bay residents that Telecom sees their school as an important test of strength.

The giant corporation has plans to install another 70 transmitters alongside schools around the country. So Telecom doesn't want to be seen backing down to Green Bay.

Nor does it want to acknowledge any health risks from the transmitters - despite mounting evidence that these exist.

For instance, a recent study on Sydney residents living around TV towers showed an increased risk of childhood leukaemia with exposure to radiation between 0.2 and 0.8 microwatts per square centimetre.

Although the radiation from TV towers is at a different frequency, the level of exposure is similar to the level found in the vicinity of cell phone towers.

Tests by the government's National Radiation Laboratory around Green Bay Primary gave maximum levels of 0.8 per square centimetre. This was from a temporary transmitter running at much less power than the planned Koala Motors installation.

And there are no restrictions on Telecom increasing the power at some future date.

Telecom refused to give a written guarantee that the transmitter is safe. The company claims "there is no conceivable link" between cell phone transmitters and health risks.

That's the same kind of language used by tobacco firms and asbestos manufacturers over the link to cancer, the US military over the agent orange scandal and the British government over mad cow disease.

The Green Bay trustees and staff are determined to vacate the premises if the tower goes ahead. They have overwhelming support from parents.

They're going out to other schools for support.

The teacher unions have a duty to protect their members and the kids they teach and therefore should be throwing their full weight behind Green Bay's fantastic stand.

To date, however, the national leaderships of the NZEI and PPTA appear to be standing off from the issue.

In the meantime, Green Bay residents are keeping a 24-hour watch on the site. They have a telephone tree to call people out if Telecom moves onto the site.

■ AUCKLAND

Two occupations generate new student energy

LIBERATE OUR CAMPUSES!

ONLY A week separated two university protests in Auckland – but there was a huge lift in the mood over that short time.

On October 1, in opposition to the “green paper”, 500 students rallied outside the Registry. They faced 50 police.

There were four separate break-ins. A “raiding party” gained covert entry to the Registry through an unlocked internal door. A side door was forced after a struggle with security guards. Some shoved their way past cops guarding a fire escape after a titanic struggle. And others used a ladder to get in a 1st floor window.

All this shows determination by the minority among the 500 who threw themselves into an occupation.

But most adopted a defensive posture in the face of police intimidation. This isn't surprising since, for the majority, it was their first experience of police stand-over tactics.

The cops regrouped, cleared the Registry and arrested twelve for trespass.

Then the crowd surrounded the paddy wagons for two hours, chanting: “Let them go!”

Eventually a squad of cops charged the protesters. To the surprise of the police, the whole 500 rallied and shoved them back, and were only overwhelmed when more cops attacked from the side. Another arrest was made.

Campus was buzzing after these extraordinary events. Another generation, fighting for free education, had got first-hand experience of the struggle for democratic control and liberation from below.

That sparked intense interest in a series of Socialist Worker Student Club posters calling on students to “liberate our universities”, “organise nationwide campus occupations” and “beat police aggro by bigger numbers”.

Students related to the cops being characterised in the posters as the state's “rent-a-mob”, helping the Coalition and the university authorities to “enforce unaffordable fees”.

A week later, on October 8, came the next protest march. Numbers



A COP goes sprawling as Auckland students fight back against police aggro, October 8

had tripled to 1,500. The demonstration ended up outside the Registry.

Along with the increase in student numbers went a change in their attitude when the police began their usual intimidating stuff.

When the police shoved, the students shoved back harder. When the cops threw students over a four-foot drop, the students threw a group of cops over.

About 150 occupied the Finance Registry and barricaded themselves in, but were eventually cleared by the police.

The cops messed the place up, and then the university administration blamed the students in a bid to set the staff against them.

Seven arrests were made. Several students were slapped with the potentially serious charge of assaulting a police officer.

The Education Action Group is building a fund-raising and solidarity campaign for all the arrestees.

Most noteworthy is the way huge numbers of students had become lots more confident when facing the “heavy mob” – the police.

The spark for this change in mood came when the police commandeered the protest truck on the second protest. A cop drove it off at high speed, hijacking all the march leaders except one who was spilled off the back.

Mark O'Brien, slammed this postponement as an attempt to silence opposition to fees.

Just before *Socialist Worker* went to press, we learned that additional charges were being laid against many of those arrested in the two occupations.

This is clearly an attempt to intimidate students and make them back away from militant actions in the next demonstration on October 16.

But this official bullying may backfire on the authorities by making students more angry.

After the two occupations, there's a new energy and positiveness among large numbers of Auckland students.

They have the feeling of empowerment that comes from taking part in a mass movement that really challenges the authorities who, until then, have been lordling it over everyone.

If this can be built on in the few days left before university finishes, it will provide a brilliant launching pad for mass occupations next year.

And that's what we need to beat fees and privatisation and undermine the Coalition.

■ WHAT THEY SAY

AUCKLAND PROTESTERS speak after the second occupation:

□ MARK: The feeling on campus has changed so dramatically over the last week. Students wanted to take back their university buildings. They were so determined to get in that they pushed cops aside. I saw cops grab people around the necks and pull them away, and the police got pushed back. I saw some cops flying. People were so damned determined today.

□ WARREN: After the police pushed a female student over a wall and she suffered head injuries, there was a real fight. Five cops went over as well. Students slammed cops up against the wall. Eggs were thrown

at the Registry and the police. There was a much more determined mood this time.

□ LEN: An ordinary student got up and asked: “Are we going to go for it, or is it going to be like last week and only a few do it?” The crowd roared back: “We'll go for it.”

The cops saw it was more serious, so they used more force, but the students stood up to them. It wasn't a defensive action, and it shook the cops up.

□ MARTYN: It's the highest level of political activity on this campus for three years.

Where was Labour?

WHERE WAS the Labour Party when Auckland students were resisting the cops and occupying their Registry on October 1 and 8?

If Labour expects students to see them as a serious alternative to the “more market” Coalition, then its MPs better take part in campus occupations which directly challenge the market.

Less parliamentary waffle and more direct actions should be demanded from Labour MPs. If they won't stand alongside us in struggles now, they aren't going to stand up to the pressures of big business when they win office.

■ WELLINGTON

NUMEROUS UNIVERSITY staff joined students in a 2,000-strong march to Parliament on October 1.

They were demonstrating against the “green paper” and also for the democratic right to protest, which is threatened by 74 arrests the week before during a peaceful rally outside Parliament.

The protesters were banned from Parliament's grounds. Alliance leader Jim Anderton gave a supportive speech.

The two-hour protest was orderly, with a mood of anger at the mass arrests and a hardening determination to defeat the “green paper”.

The authorities' heavy-handed actions have led to greater involvement of students and staff in the fight against the privatisation of education.

□ SEE LETTER from Varsity Student, page 2.

□ GREEN PAPER

THE GREEN paper, recently issued by the Coalition, is the most serious threat to students, staff and tertiary education ever seen in this country.

It opens the way to privatising universities and polytechs, and charging fees even higher than those now gouged out of students.

It's another example of the last-ditch “more market” blitz being orchestrated by the Coalition before it's booted out of office.

The green paper could mean:

■ Tertiary institutions become “Crown companies” that must generate a “return on capital”. Unprofitable departments, like humanities, would be downsized or closed.

■ Tertiary institutions “change their capital structure” by forming joint ventures with private companies. Academic freedom will fly out the window when corporate bosses start running things.

■ Public funding to be capped. As student numbers rise, this will reduce the per capita worth of vouchers (called “entitlements” in the green paper) available to each student. Fees will soar to cover the growing gap.

■ Under the voucher system, private institutions to be funded on the same basis as public universities and polytechs. Public money will fund the privatisation of tertiary education.

■ Government-appointed boards of directors to replace university councils. This will eliminate elected staff and student representatives, stifling even the tiny fragments of democracy in the present set-up.

WHOSE UNIVERSITY is it anyway?

That question is directly posed by the accumulation of unprecedented events:

■ The punishing fees imposed on tertiary students this decade, which just keep getting higher.

■ The Coalition's recent “green paper” move towards the privatisation of universities.

■ The quickening cycle of campus occupations and the growth of an “occupation mindset” among students.

■ The more frequent use of police to attack occupations and “heavy” protesters.

■ The growth of a mood of anger and defiance among a sizeable slice of students.

All these things mean a more radical political atmosphere is starting to permeate campuses around Aotearoa.

We need to start asking more insistently: “Whose university is it anyway?”

Should it be under the thumb of Right-wing politicians?

Or bureaucratic, fee-gouging administrators?

Or big business managers surfing in on a privatisation wave?

No! Students and staff should have democratic control of their own campuses.

Students should have free education that helps them liberate their minds. Staff should have job security, academic freedom and decent pay.

But that means kicking the market out of education.

And it means fighting for a new type of society which is collectively and democratically run by all the people in their own interests, instead of today's class-divided, profit-driven system which benefits only a ruling elite.

So what's the next step forwards? Nationwide campus occupations next year.

If there are student occupations at all campuses, supported by teaching staff, the government's agenda of fees and privatisation will come under real pressure.

Campus occupations by thousands of students will have the numbers to beat the cops and attract widespread public sympathy.

It will be a huge addition to the growing revolt against the Coalition, which could spell an early death to this despised administration.

Liberate our universities! Organise nationwide campus occupations!

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